DESIGN GOALS AND GUIDELINES

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3.1 Purpose and Application of Design Goals

This chapter sets design goals and guidelines for landscaping and site amenity improvements along the 18.5-mile corridor. These goals and guidelines address such issues as aesthetics, safety, security, plant types, maintenance, and intended uses of the facility. The goals are broad statements which can be applied to various improvements and areas along the right-of-way. The implementation objectives that follow the goal statements are specific examples or applications of the goal. The key purpose of these design goals is to ensure that corridor improvements (as likely to be implemented by different sponsors over a period of years) will result in an integrated, cohesive design. The Public Works Department and the Advisory Committee will monitor projects to ensure they meet the Design Goals and Guidelines.

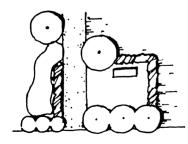
3.2 Corridor Design Goals

Overall Goal

Create a cohesive landscape experience that reflects the landscape character and historic character of Diablo and San Ramon Valleys and responds to the social needs and physical character of each community along the corridor. Corridor improvements should be consistent with the landscape character of the immediate area and existing and future uses.

Design Goals

D-1: Use three landscape character types to guide the design of Corridor improvements.



Three distinct environments characterize adjacent conditions along the 18.5-mile corridor. The physical character of these environments can provide general design guidance for planting and site amenity improvements to ensure that the improvements reflect and enhance the character of the immediate area.

a) Suburban

Adjacent Land Uses: Adjacent land uses include single family and multi-family housing, and commercial and light industrial uses. This landscape character type is dominant in the Concord, Pleasant Hill and Walnut Creek areas and in some parts of Danville and San Ramon.

Design Guidelines:

- Create a comfortable, vegetated environment by screening buildings and fences.
- Select plants that are finely textured and have distinct form, structure, and color.
- Create defined areas either informal or formal.
- Design rest areas and entries to accommodate level of use commensurate with the population of the adjacent residential areas.
- Provide shade at intervals along the corridor.

b) Rural

Adjacent Land Uses: Low density residential and agricultural (horse properties and orchards) are principal land uses that characterize this section. Roads tend to be two-lane rural and lined with trees. This area is most dominant in Alamo and the north segment of the corridor in Danville.

Design Guidelines:

- · Create informal rest areas and entries.
- Use plants that are more coarse and reflect a more rural, agricultural environment. Create more irregular and informal planting areas.

c) Valley

Adjacent Land Uses: Low density residential and wide roads characterize this area. The open, spacious character of San Ramon Valley and the distant oak

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covered ridges are strong visual elements in the corridor. This character is primarily found in the area from Sycamore Valley Road south to the Alameda County line in San Ramon.

Design Guidelines:

- Create naturalistic settings to reinforce the Valley landscape.
- Use a small palette of native plants appropriate to the area. Limit creation of diverse, formal plant displays.
- Provide shade at intervals along the corridor.
- · Provide landscape windbreaks.

D-2: Create a subtle, consistent identity and sense of place along the entire corridor by placing certain landscape elements with regularity.

Implementation Objectives

- a) Use certain plants or plant groupings with regularity along a segment.
- b) Use some landscape elements, such as trail markers or benches, with frequency throughout the corridor. Most trail elements, such as signs or gates, should have a uniform design throughout the corridor.
- c) Use unique plant groupings or site amenities in certain areas to avoid creating a monotonous landscape.

D-3: Use plant groupings in the region's natural landscape as the dominant landscape theme for the Corridor interspersed with agricultural plant groupings to reflect the historical character of the region.

D-4: Develop clear connections to adjacent neighborhoods and public areas. Implementation Objectives

- a) Enhance pedestrian/bicycle linkages to school grounds and parks with landscaping and signs.
- b) At street crossings, use landscape materials that are consistent in scale with the landscape of the adjacent neighborhood and street. These areas can be visually set off either by texture, color, or placement.
- c) At commercial areas, set off the trail visually from the adjacent area by using plants or structures different from the immediate area.

- d) Allow for screening where neighbors desire to enhance their property line. Use non-intrusive plants (consistent with minimum maintenance requirements) that screen the fence and are consistent in type and placement for that section of corridor.
- e) Explore shared use of existing parking facilities along the corridor. Explore opportunities to provide parking for trail users in existing parking areas that are not used during the weekend.
- f) To maximize safe crossing of roads, discourage parking in road shoulders within the corridor.

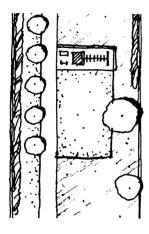
D-5: Respond to the social needs of the local community in design improvements. Implementation Objectives

a) Identify trail users and civic groups that represent users in each community. Encourage their participation in developing design changes in their area. Specific needs may require certain site furnishings, play areas, or food crop gardens for schools.

D-6: Encourage local expressions of design in a way that reinforces the character of the overall Corridor landscape plan. Establish a mechanism to facilitate local efforts to improve the Corridor.

Implementation Objectives

- a) Allow local groups or neighborhoods to design and, if desired, establish planting areas that may be different from other plants in the corridor. Ensure that these areas are consistent with general guidelines.
- b) Allow communities to install unique amenities, such as a drinking fountain or bench. Such improvements must meet the safety requirements of the managing entity and the design guidelines for the corridor.
- c) Develop a process to allow adjacent homeowners to plant along their fence in the corridor as long as plants meet established design guidelines for the area, fit into the design for the particular corridor segment, and maintenance responsibilities are clarified.
- d) Explore alternatives and develop an efficient design review process for interested parties to submit a proposed improvement project.



Goal D-7 allows for active play or rest areas in the corridor.

D-7: Where local agencies desire, accommodate active play or rest areas in the corridor.

Implementation Objectives

- a) Use landscape materials to create resting or activity spaces away from the trail in the corridor that meet public safety standards.
- b) Identify areas that could benefit from shaded resting spaces, lawns, grass fields for seating areas or activity spaces.
- c) Identify areas where local park space is limited and where an activity space could be developed on the corridor.
- d) Identify certain corridor/street intersections where a resting space could be created.

D-8: Integrate and interpret the local history of the community and the regional history of the right-of-way.

Implementation Objectives

- a) Integrate the trail with adjacent uses that were associated with the former rail uses.
- b) Highlight former bridges and other remaining rail infrastructure.
- c) Use discreet markers (or simple signs) to indicate important former land uses or buildings associated with the railroad.
- d) Work with local historic societies to identify historic interpretation opportunities.

D-9: Create more informational and educational connections to adjacent communities from the Corridor.

Implementation Objectives

a) Identify important historic or open space resources and commercial sites within each community and provide appropriate informational signs to these areas from the corridor.

3.3 Landscape Goals and Criteria

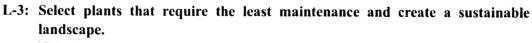
L-1: Landscaping should be consistent with the requirements of any surface or subsurface easement or license agreements, and should recognize the future potential rail corridor.

Criteria

- a) Identify utility easements prior to initiating a planting plan or site amenity design plan.
- b) Trees and shrubs with extensive root systems should be evaluated on a case by case basis to ensure that they will not violate easement agreements.
- c) Future easement and license agreements should be consistent with and supportive of the *Landscape Element* of the *Corridor Management Program* to the maximum extent practicable.
- d) Monitor utility installation and maintenance to limit damage to existing landscaped areas and site amenities.
- e) Protect trees within the corridor according to the requirements of the County tree ordinance.
- L-2: Encourage the use of native plant species from Central Contra Costa County and associated non-native plant species. Create a natural landscape that recalls the native landscape of the region.

Criteria

- a) Where possible, use seeds and seedlings from locally indigenous plants.
- b) Work with local horticultural organizations to identify and procure plants historically appropriate to the region.

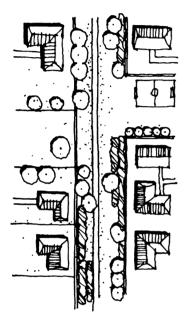


Criteria

- a) Select plants with the greatest drought tolerance, fire resistance, pest resistance, and deer resistance.
- b) Select plants that do not require regular pruning or clearing to appear attractive.
- c) Where possible, select trees and plants that can be established within three years or less and live without irrigation.



Goal L-2 encourages native plant species or associated non-native plant species.



Goal L-4 advises consideration of local conditions when selecting plants.

- d) Plant massing of native or ecologically appropriate species to enhance habitat value for wildlife and create a cohesive natural landscape.
- e) Consider opportunities to encourage plant succession by planting species that improve soil and micro-climatic conditions for more ecologically appropriate species to take root later.
- f) Eradicate plants that are invasive and a nuisance, such as star thistle and puncture vine.

L-4: Consider local conditions when selecting plants including: land uses, architectural conditions, maintenance needs, traffic safety, security issues, climate, and trail use activity.

Criteria

- a) When placing plants near trail and road intersections, maintain an unobstructed view for trail users and motorists to maximize road crossing safety.
- b) Consider adjacent property owners' views of hills or other landscape features when developing a planting plan.
- c) Avoid creating places near the trail where people can hide.
- d) Enhance local architectural character where possible by selecting plants which are consistent in scale and general character.
- e) Where permissible, use shade trees to create cool resting spaces.

L-5: Acknowledge the change of seasons, flowering patterns and fragrances to create landscapes that maintain interest throughout the year.

3.4 Site Amenity Goals and Criteria

A-1: Provide site amenities or trail access at regular intervals along the Corridor to maximize convenience to trail users.

Criteria

- a) Maximize the use of existing off-site amenities, particularly restrooms and drinking water.
- b) Provide maintenance agreements for new amenities.
- c) In general, concentrate the location of amenities at or near trail/street

- intersections. Minimize impacts to existing residences or the environment.
- d) Allow trial periods with performance criteria to test the acceptability of the location of a new amenity. Allow for the removal of a new amenity that causes significant impacts to the neighborhood or environment.
- e) Provide trash receptacles and drinking fountains or a water supply for people and pets.
- f) Provide benches in shady spaces and near intersections.
- g) Provide clean up plastic bags for dog litter in appropriate locations.
- A-2: Create safe trail/street intersection conditions.

Criteria

- a) Use consistent and well-marked trail crossings.
- b) Limit parking to maximize sight distance at trail crossings.
- A-3: Explore and evaluate opportunities for increasing safety and capacity on the trail either through the addition of a smaller or less formal trail, or widening the existing trail within the corridor.
- A-4: Recognize the potential rail corridor in the design and construction of site amenities.